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AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY 1975

Edited by John E. Rielly

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations

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Introduction

The survey on which this report is based was conducted in December 1974, shortly after the 94th Congress was elected with an overwhelming Democratic majority in both houses. President Ford had been in office for four months and was beginning to replace many of the officials of the Nixon administration with appointees of his own. The President was beginning to tackle the most severe economic recession that had confronted the country since the Great Depression. The inflation rate for the previous twelve months had averaged over twelve percent, and unemployment figures were rising towards eight percent. Massive layoffs continued in the auto industry in Detroit and related industries around the country. Yet the stock market was just beginning to climb from its ten year low in October 1974, and the Dow-Jones index would soon be moving back up through the 600's.

Both before and since the survey was taken, events were emphasizing the need for a clear view of American attitudes on the U.S. role in the world. Congress was also being forced once again to face the Vietnam question, this time with strong opposition to the Ford administration's effort to obtain additional military assistance for South Vietnam and Cambodia. A series of articles by Seymour Hersh in the *New York Times* in December, alleging illegal domestic operations by the Central Intelligence Agency, provoked a furor. Special Congressional committees were appointed to supplement a special commission headed by Vice President Rockefeller, which the President had appointed to look into the question of the CIA's domestic role. An arms control agreement initiated by President Ford and Soviet Secretary Brezhnev at Vladivostok on November 24, encountered a barrage of Congressional criticism from both left and right. The new Congress promised to take a close look at the direction for U.S. foreign policy, especially with the growing importance of international economic issues that require Congressional action. And the Soviet Union disavowed the trade agreement which it had signed in 1972 because of U.S. Congressional legislation tying Most Favored Nation (MFN) treatment and credits for the Soviet Union to emigration of its minorities.

By the autumn of 1974, Congress had already begun to move to limit the actions of the executive branch of the government in international affairs. The Jackson-Vanik amendment on emigration was only one of several efforts to restrict the administration's actions. Other legislative initiatives also brought Congress into a clash with the administration on aid to Turkey. And there was strong Congressional opposition to the President's action in January when he imposed a tariff on oil imports.

The Secretary of State spent much time at the end of the year preparing to present his view of the proper balance between Congress and the executive branch of the government in the conduct of American foreign policy. Secretary Kissinger detailed his views in an interview in *Business Week*, January 12, 1975: "The attempt to prescribe every detail of policy by Congressional action, can, over a period of time, so stultify flexibility that you have no negotiating room left. We recognize that the Congress must exercise ultimate policy control. But what is meant by that, how much detail is what we intend to discuss very seriously with the Congressional leadership when it reassembles."

A number of Congressional leaders presented alternative views. Senator Lloyd M. Bentsen of Texas accused Secretary Kissinger of following a "dangerously constricted and convoluted" foreign policy with "an undemocratic emphasis on secret diplomacy, personal negotiations and one-man authoritarianism." (February 7, 1975)

As the United States neared the end of the third quarter of the twentieth century, public and leadership support for a foreign policy which committed the United States to a continued and substantial—if reduced—commitment overseas was increasingly being questioned. It remained unclear whether a mood of withdrawal from world responsibility would continue, following the after effects of the long decade of massive military involvement in Vietnam. Meanwhile, economic events in the world moved toward effectively ending the chances for U.S. isolation.

At this time of transition the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations believes it is important to seek and understand the views of the public and national leaders on a series of international questions. In particular, it is important to learn the extent to which the American public and American leaders favor continued United States involvement overseas at a time when this involvement may no longer be identified with military commitment or action, especially in Southeast Asia. To what extent are Americans and their leaders prepared to support continued involvement in the world, though perhaps in a different way than over the past two decades? What role do the public and our leaders want the U.S. to play? How do domestic and foreign policy concerns and priorities relate to one another? How is growing U.S. interdependence with other nations affecting these views? What kinds of sacrifices are the American people prepared to make to support a foreign policy? And who should make foreign policy?

These are some of the questions that need to be answered—and the answers heeded in Washington—if U.S. foreign policy is to regain the confidence and support of the American people.

In November 1974, the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations commissioned Louis Harris & Associates to conduct surveys of both the general public and national leaders, in order to answer these questions.

The public survey involved a stratified systematic national sample of 1,513 respondents, representing Americans aged 18 years and older. In tabulations, cases were weighted so as to eliminate any sampling distortions with respect to age, sex, or race. Field work was conducted between December 6th and December 14th, 1974.

The leadership sample included 328 individuals, representing—as best could be determined—Americans in leadership positions with the greatest influence upon and knowledge about foreign relations. They were drawn, in roughly equal proportions, from the political world, including Senators and Representatives (chiefly members of the Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs committees); officials of the Department of State, and officials with international responsibilities from other government departments; from the business community (presidents and chairmen, as well as international vice presidents, of major corporations; leaders of business associations); from communications (editors and publishers of major newspapers; wire service executives; television broadcasters); and from education (presidents and chancellors of major universities and foundations; foreign affairs experts). In somewhat lesser numbers they were drawn also from among the leaders of major labor unions, churches, voluntary organizations (fraternal, foreign policy oriented, and other), and ethnic and other politically oriented organizations. The field work was conducted between December 10th and December 29th.

All interviewing, coding and tabulating was conducted through the facilities of the Harris organization under the direction of Carolyn Setlow. The initial design and contents of the questionnaire were prepared by the Harris organization. After being discussed with a number of individuals from the Congress, executive branch, universities and foundations, the questionnaire was revised by the editor, and by Carolyn Setlow, Professor Bernard Cohen of the University of Wisconsin (author of *The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy*, 1973) and Professor Benjamin Page of the University of Chicago (author, with Richard Brody, of "The Impact of Events on Presidential Popularity" in *The Presidency*, forthcoming). In preparing this report we have benefitted greatly from an initial analysis prepared by the Harris organization. The summary analysis and interpretation of the data presented here are the responsibility of the editor.

We have also benefitted from the comprehensive studies published by Potomac Associates e.g. *State of the Nation* 1974, by William Watts and Lloyd Free, and such specialized studies as *World Poverty and Development: A Survey of American Opinion* published by the Overseas Development Council (Paul Laudacina, editor).

We decided to publish our analysis of the data revealed by the national and leadership samples as early as possible in 1975. We believe that the advantages of a brief but timely report outweigh the disadvantages of not being able to prepare a comprehensive and detailed study in such a short period of time. This report should be considered in that light.

The data derived from this study will be placed on deposit with the Survey Research Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan and the Harris Center at Chapel Hill, North Carolina. We wish to express our deep appreciation to the Harris organization, especially Carolyn Setlow, Lou Harris and Kermit Lansner for their tireless efforts and close cooperation working under a tight deadline. Many other friends and colleagues assisted us in the completion of this project. Among those who deserve special mention are John Sullivan of the House Foreign Affairs Committee staff; Charles Bray and Frank Wisner of the U.S. Department of State; Peter Bell of the Ford Foundation; Laura Bornholt of the Lilly Endowment and David Hardin of Market Facts, Inc.

I want to express my deep appreciation to the two principal collaborators who worked on all stages of this project, Professor Bernard Cohen and Professor Benjamin Page.

Special thanks are due to Nora Dell, the Editor and Director of Publications of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, who worked with us at every stage of the project, arranged for the design and layout of the report and was responsible for seeing the report through to publication.

I also want to acknowledge a special debt of gratitude to my long time friend and colleague, Robert Hunter, who once again provided invaluable assistance in the analysis, writing and editing of the report. I would also like to thank Norma Newkirk who carried an enormous typing load with professionalism and good humor.

On behalf of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, I wish to express our appreciation to the Ford Foundation and the Lilly Endowment for funding the entire project.

John E. Rielly, President
The Chicago Council
on Foreign Relations
February 15, 1975

Summary Findings

A number of important conclusions emerged from the study—some of which were expected, and some of which were not.

DOMESTIC VERSUS FOREIGN POLICY

Not surprisingly, domestic economic difficulties attract far more interest and attention than almost any foreign policy problem. Even so, there is little sentiment among the American public for a retreat from the world—and virtually none among leaders sampled. But there are some inconsistencies in public views.

In general, both samples believe that federal spending on domestic programs should be expanded, and spending on foreign programs reduced. Even where opinion on this matter varies, the highest priorities tend to be assigned to *expanding* domestic programs first and *cutting* foreign and defense programs first.

At this same time, there is a high degree of public understanding about the growing economic interdependence of the United States with the rest of the world: oil and gasoline imports head the list of concrete examples. Still, the belief is more prevalent that the world is dependent on us (particularly for food) than the other way around.

In this era of interdependence, the American public is prepared to make some sacrifices for U.S. cooperation with other countries. This includes high majority support for cutting U.S. gasoline consumption (though not for higher taxes), if this would help developing countries, or if it were needed to aid us or our Allies against an oil embargo. The public is also willing to cut U.S. food consumption (but not accept higher prices) to help poor countries. American leaders are even more willing to see these sacrifices made.

THE UNITED STATES ROLE IN THE WORLD

Two-thirds of the American public shares a great belief that "the United States should play an active role in the world"; 99% of the leaders agree. However, there is widespread disagreement over the specific forms this role should take.

A large majority of the public also believes that real American concerns should be at home, and 52% that we should build up our own defenses and let the rest of the world take care of itself. Leaders are most consistent, with only 26% saying they believe that real concerns should be at home, and only 10% favoring letting the world take care of itself.

The public is fairly evenly divided on whether the United States is as important in the world as it was ten years ago. Leaders strongly believe our importance has slipped. Both groups, meanwhile, support a somewhat more important role for the United States in the future —for reasons of past leadership, economic strength, democratic ideals, and the need for leadership to solve world problems. U.S. leaders are more concerned about each of these factors than is the general public.

Leaders who want the U.S. to play a *less* important role abroad most often cite the relative shift of power to other countries; the public cites domestic political and economic problems.

American public and leadership opinion rates economic strength as the most important aspect of U.S. leadership in the world; leaders place moral values second; skill in negotiating settlements that avoid war third; and scientific progress fourth. The public, by contrast, rank skill at negotiations second, military strength third; moral values fourth;: and science and technology fifth.

For both groups, willingness to make military commitments to other countries and to keep them, ranks below other aspects of U.S. leadership as very important.

At the same time, keeping the peace in the world was the leading U.S. foreign policy goal for both leaders and public, international cooperation was second, promoting U.S. security was third, and worldwide arms control was fourth.

On the preceding list, both groups agree that we are doing best in promoting our own security and keeping the peace in the world second. However, less than a third of public or leadership opinion (28% and 27%, respectively) thinks that agreements with Russia and China mean there is little chance of a world war.

UNITED STATES DEFENSE AND MILITARY INVOLVEMENT

About half of the American public (46%) wants to keep the defense budget where it is; 13% believe that it should be expanded; and 32% believe that it should be reduced. A majority of American leaders (56%), however, wants to cut defense, with only 8% opting for expansion, and 36% for keeping it the same.

However, public opinion is more willing (42%) to cut the defense budget when a choice is suggested between defense and domestic priorities, than when defense is considered on its own (only 32% for cuts). Leaders appear to see defense cuts as a matter of making choices in any event.

More than a third of leaders (34%) cite defense cuts as one of their first or second top priorities for budget reductions while 17% of the public agrees. The public puts greater emphasis on

first cutting foreign military aid (35%) and foreign economic aid (24%). Leaders cite military aid 30% of the time as their choice of one or two areas in which to begin cutting, while only 5% of leaders cite economic aid.

U.S. military strength relative to that of the Soviet Union is the most important factor in determining whether public and leadership opinion will favor or oppose defense budget cuts; the effect of defense cuts on unemployment is the next most important factor. When asked, the public is more concerned about the effects of defense cuts on unemployment; leaders are more willing than the public at large to cut spending if it wouldn't mean our falling behind the Soviet Union. It would appear that an adequate economic conversion program would influence public attitudes toward defense cuts.

Both groups think that being strong militarily is very important; but only 36% of each group thinks that making and keeping military commitments to other countries is very important. Two-thirds of the public agrees (33% strongly) that power is what counts in the world, today; but only a bare majority of leaders agree (19% strongly).

This contrast between levels of support for military strength and commitments was also reported in responses to questions about desired U.S. behavior in crisis situations. If friendly countries are attacked, only a quarter of the public (23%) would send aid plus U.S. troops, while a third (34%) of leaders would do so. Only 9% of the public and 1% of leaders would refuse even to send any military or economic aid. These public attitudes vary considerably on the basis of beliefs that Vietnam was either a proud or dark moment in U.S. foreign policy history—45% of the former group favors sending U.S. troops to defend "friendly countries," while only 18% of the latter group would do so.

If specific countries were attacked, a majority of the public (77%) would respond with U.S. troops only in the case of Canada (leaders 90%), while a majority of leaders would also respond with troops to an attack on Western Europe (77% to 39% of the public), or a Soviet takeover of West Berlin (55% to 34% of the public).

If Israel were being defeated by the Arabs, only 27% of the American people would favor sending U.S. troops (50% would oppose it, and 23% are "not sure"). Forty-one percent of leaders would send troops, 44% would oppose it, and 15% are not sure.

If the Arabs cut off the oil supply to Western Europe, only 21% of the American public would favor sending U.S. troops (22% of leaders would do so), and only 14% would respond with troops if Japan's oil were cut off (15% of leaders would do so).

Only 25% of the public would support military action against the Arab oil producers today (although the question was posed in the absence of an embargo or other threat). If the President and Secretary of State asked for public support for such action, only 32% of the public would respond favorably. Similar small increases in support in response to Administration leadership were registered for non-military areas.

Moreover, in the event of a further oil embargo, only 6% of the U.S. public would favor invasion as their first choice of responses (4% among leaders). The public would prefer sharing oil with others (40% to leadership's 83%), or going it alone (38% to leadership's 10%). In general, there is low public support for getting involved in places where war might actually occur, or where U.S. commitments and interests might actually be tested.

In addition to the high order of priority given to cutting foreign military aid by both leaders and public opinion, the survey revealed that only 22% of the public favor any such aid at all. Forty percent of leaders back it, however, and tend to see more value in this aid for our domestic economy, and less damage, than did the general public. Public attitudes for or against military aid largely reflect beliefs about whether or not it promotes U.S. national security.

Foreign military sales are less unpopular than military aid, with 58% of leaders favoring such sales, but only 35% of the public.

In general, more recent American wars are less popular than earlier wars, varying from a high of 68% of the public seeing World War II as a proud moment for America (13%, a dark moment), to a low of only 8% seeing Vietnam in this way (72% a dark moment). Yet less than half the public sampled (42% to 44% against) thought the Vietnam War taught us we shouldn't enter wars we couldn't win (leaders even more firmly rejected this idea as a lesson of Vietnam, by 38% to 55%). About two-thirds of the public learned from Vietnam that we shouldn't support corrupt regimes or get involved in civil wars—while a majority learned that sometimes we have to support regimes we don't like, because a communist takeover would be worse.

Seventy-six percent of the American public see the military as having an important role in making foreign policy (36% see it as very important), compared with 93% who see the Secretary of State as important. Meanwhile, 83% of U.S. leaders see the military's role as being important. A net balance of 8% of the public want that role reduced; while a net balance of 51% of leaders argue for a reduction.

UNITED STATES POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE WORLD

The great majority of the American people and their leaders (66% and 99%, respectively) accept a positive role for the United States in the rest of the world. Also, fully 82% of the public and 95% of the leaders believe that some problems (like food, energy, and inflation) are so big that no country can solve them alone, and that they can be solved only through international cooperation. Half of the public and more than 80% of leaders think we should consult with allies before making major foreign policy decisions.

The American people are ambivalent about international organizations, however. An overwhelming majority (82%) saw the U.S. role in founding the United Nations as a proud moment in our history, but only a bare majority (53%) think it is very important for the U.S. to be a world leader in international organizations such as the U.N. Three-fifths of the public think that the superpowers are more important than the U.N. in keeping other countries from going to war; however, a similar number think we should conduct more of our foreign policy through international institutions.

Nearly three-quarters of the public thinks that having good relations with Western Europe, Japan, and the Soviet Union is very important; 68% with the Arab countries; 63% with Asia; 62%

with Latin America; and 56% with Africa. Leadership opinion places greater weight on good relations with each area or country, except for Asia and Africa.

Hostility towards some of the communist countries, where stable relationships have been created, has gone down. For example, 58% of the public believes that the U.S. and U.S.S.R. can reach agreements to keep peace, and there is favorable support—between 60% and 84%—for nine specific areas of possible superpower agreements (leadership support was much higher). Fifty-three percent of Americans favor full diplomatic relations with Cuba (84% of leaders favor it). Fifty-five percent of Americans believe we can reach long-term agreements with China to keep the peace (76% of leaders believe this).

However, about half (46%) of both samples believe that more countries are likely to become communist in the next decade, and there is widespread belief that in certain cases this would pose a threat to the United States, ranging downward from Western European countries (public opinion: 71%); Latin American countries (69%), Japan (67%), and African countries (51%). Leaders see lower threats in each case, with only 54% worrying about Latin American countries, and 30% in the case of African countries. About half the public believes that communist governments in Italy and Portugal would be a threat to the U.S. (50% Italy, 47% Portugal)—though fewer leaders believe so.

Two-thirds of the American public (and seven-eighths of leaders) believe that the U.S. should put pressure on countries which systematically violate basic human rights. Three quarters of both samples believe it is morally wrong to back military dictatorships that deny basic rights, even if we can have military bases in those countries. A majority (57%) of leaders think we should do more to oppose apartheid in South Africa; but only a third of the public thinks this way.

Nearly two-thirds of leaders disagree that "how the Soviet Union handles the treatment of the Jews or other minority groups is a matter of internal Soviet politics, and none of our business," nearly half the public (48%) share this view. Yet almost all leaders (97%) want to expand trade with the Soviet Union; and two-thirds of the public want to do so as well.

UNITED STATES ECONOMIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE WORLD

Almost every major economic problem—inflation, recession, and resources—ranks ahead of traditional foreign policy concerns in public and leadership attitudes. There is a preference to use U.S. economic resources at home; but a compensating desire exists to use foreign policy to benefit U.S. and foreign economies.

There is also high awareness of the impact of foreign affairs on the U.S. economy. Eighty-seven percent of the public believes foreign policy has a major impact on the price of gasoline at home; 78% on the value of the dollar abroad; 77% on the overall U.S. economy; and majorities on the sale of U.S. goods abroad (69%), supplies of raw materials for manufacturing (64%), the price of manufactured products (63%), and unemployment rates (59%). U.S. leaders are largely in agreement. Thus the traditional dividing line between foreign and domestic issues has become blurred.

Public attitudes toward involvement in the international economy significantly reflect concern with domestic economic difficulties. Most important, a large majority of the American public (80%) favors cooperation with other consumer states to reduce dependence on outside supplies of energy. This was so even if gasoline consumption had to be reduced and tax dollars spent. Leaders (97%) overwhelmingly support such cooperation.

A large majority (83%) of the American public favors joint cooperation with the Soviet Union to help solve the world energy shortage. But a plurality of the public (39%) opposes easy-term loans to developing countries to meet balance of payments deficits caused by rising oil costs (72% of leaders favor such loans).

The American public also favors unilateral action on resources. Eighty-seven percent favor spending tax money to develop new energy sources; 78% are willing to cut gasoline consumption by 10%; 75% to go without meat one day a week, in order to export food abroad to combat shortages; 68% to cut out nonessential uses of fertilizer; 59% to accept gasoline rationing; but only 30% to accept a gasoline tax of 25¢ a gallon.

The American public does not see itself as highly responsive to Presidential leadership on these issues. If the President and Secretary of State asked, public support would rise by only 8% or less for going without meat one day a week, spending tax dollars on energy resources, cutting back gasoline consumption, accepting a gasoline tax rise, and accepting a 10% rise in the price of food.

About half the American public (52%) support the principle of foreign economic aid, but 56% also wants the level cut back; only 10% wants it increased. Earlier aid efforts are widely regarded as proud moments in U.S. history. Cuts are particularly favored when seen in the context of competing domestic priorities. Humanitarian and emergency aid, however, are strongly supported.

College graduates and U.S. leaders favor economic aid more than the general public, although there is strong popular support for raising the standard of living in other countries. There is more public support for economic aid when it is clear that it actually helps people in poor countries.

Attitudes towards foreign economic aid are highly related to its impact on the U.S. economy, with 25% of the public thinking it helps our economy, and 63% that it hurts. Foreign economic aid is seen to help other economies (77% of public opinion agrees), it is seen to help others live better (70%), and it is seen to help the national security of other countries (65%); but these aims do not have high public priority. The principal opposition to foreign economic aid is based on doubts that it helps our national security or our domestic economy.

WHO MAKES U.S. FOREIGN POLICY?

Public opinion judges Secretary of State Kissinger and television news highest as very reliable sources of information on U.S. foreign policy. Leadership opinion agrees on the Secretary of State, rates newspapers and private foreign policy organizations next, and gives a low rating to television news.

No more than 31% of the public sampled follow any foreign news event very closely, and the highest rating in the December 1974 sample tended to go to events then in prominence. On average, only about 20% of the public follows foreign policy issues very closely.

The American public overwhelmingly believes that the Secretary of State plays the dominant role in U.S. foreign policy. Seventy-three percent (97% of leaders) see his role as very important, compared to only 49% of the public (51% of leaders) who judge the President's role in that way.

In contrast, 39% of public opinion sees the role of Congress as being very important (18% of leadership opinion agrees); while the role of public opinion is itself rated at a mere 19% (15% rating by leaders). The discrepancy in popular and leadership opinion about the role of Congress was also reflected in estimates of the role of business: 42% of the public sees the role of business as very important, but only 25% of leaders do. The CIA (in a sample taken after the disclosures about Chile but before those on domestic activities) was rated as very important in U.S. foreign policy by only 18% of leaders, and 28% of the general public.

In terms of working for peace in the world, President Ford receives a 50% popular rating of excellent or pretty good and 52% from leaders; while Congress' rating is 42% from the public and 32% from leaders. Comparing the two, only 10% of leaders and public opinion think that Congress is playing too strong a role, while 38% of the public and 51% of leaders think that its role is too weak.

On doing his job, the Secretary of State receives a positive rating from 85% of leaders, and 75% of the general public. A majority of both samples are also inclined to give him latitude in personal diplomacy, although there is strong sentiment for greater public and Congressional influence on the shape and conduct of foreign affairs.

I. The Priority Of Foreign Policy

A national survey on one specialized area will tend to exaggerate the area's significance in the everyday lives of ordinary people. By posing a long list of questions on a single subject, the survey can make it appear that the subject at issue is uppermost in the public mind. It is important, therefore, to begin by introducing some perspective. This national sample represents the adult population of the United States, with all its rich diversity—cultural, educational, social, economic, professional, religious and residential. But to what extent are the respondents in this sample interested in *any* horizons other than the immediate ones that surround their private lives? What hold does foreign policy have on their minds? What priority does it have in their view of public and private concerns? And how does the public differ from the sample of leaders chosen because of the latter's more active role in shaping the course of the nation?

We can begin to answer these questions by posing a further one: How interested is the American public in news about various subjects and events? Local and national news predictably are at the top: 56% of the public describe themselves as "very interested" in both. News about other countries comes in last, with 35% "very interested," and 20% "hardly interested at all." Nearly half (49%) report themselves as "very interested in news about the relations of the U.S. with other countries—slightly more than the 47% who are very interested in state level news.

These statements on interest in news about U.S. foreign relations probably cannot be taken at face value, however, because individuals tend to over report the amount of interest they have in subjects that are of apparent interest to interviewers. Indeed, when the public sample was asked how closely they had followed news about eleven different and specific foreign policy events, a rather different picture emerged.

TABLE I-1. How closely would you say you personally have followed news about the following events—The Public

	Very Closely %	Somewhat Closely %	Not Very Closely %	Not Sure %
The World Food Conference	31	32	35	2
Problems in the Middle East	29	39	31	1
Kissinger's trip to China	28	39	32	1
Arafat's visit to the U.N.	20	28	48	3
Discussion about the U.S. recognizing Cuba	18	36	44	1
Ford-Brezhnev summit meeting	17	33	48	2
Congressional debates on foreign defense spending	16	36	47	2
The war in Cyprus	15	34	49	2
Congressional debates on foreign aid	14	36	49	1
What's happening in Vietnam these days	14	34	50	2
Elections in Great Britain	6	20	72	2

It is important to note that no item on this list was followed "very closely" by even one-third of the public. Only four items were followed "very closely" by one-fifth or more. Nearly one-half of the public acknowledged that they had not followed seven out of the eleven issues very closely at all.

Limited interest in foreign policy questions is also reflected in the proportion of "not sure" answers to specific questions that require more than an intuitive or "gut" response. In the survey of the general public, the "not sures" were generally in the 10% range, and often went to the 25-35% range; but for the sample of leaders, the proportion of "not sures" was approximately half that for the general public.

Next, there is the question of the *relative* value attached to foreign policy issues. In one sense, the priority that Americans accord to foreign policy is low: domestic economic issues take strong precedence among the American people and its leadership over the familiar issues of external relations that have pre-occupied the U.S. for the past

generation. But in another sense, the priority of foreign policy is high, if we talk about *new* issues of external relations. For example, the course of domestic economic policy and welfare is widely seen as highly interdependent with events taking place in the rest of the world. Let us look at this phenomenon in more detail.

One of the clearest findings in this survey is the predominance of domestic economic questions over other public policy issues. When the survey was conducted, the annual rate of inflation was running over 12%, and unemployment was near 8%. At that time, both public and leaders expressed most concern about the problem of inflation, while leaders also ranked recession and the energy crisis high on the agenda for federal government action; public opinion is less concerned with recession, and even less with energy. Traditional foreign policy questions ranked rather low on the agenda for federal government action by both public and leaders, as the following table makes clear.

The public also places a higher emphasis on those foreign policy issues that have implications for the domestic economy. When asked to name the two or three biggest *foreign policy* problems facing the United States—ripe for federal action—the public placed foreign aid at the top of the list (33%). And the chief reasons given for opposing it —in answer to this free response question—were the need to "stop supporting the rest of the world" and to "take care of our needs first." Next in importance was the oil shortage and related issues (25%), and the Middle East (14%) —though this issue, too, is related to the U.S. economy (oil). Only after these issues did "keeping the peace," "cooperating with other nations," and "avoiding war" appear (13%), followed by concern for our balance of trade (10%).

Leaders responded somewhat differently, perhaps reflecting a higher interest in foreign issues in their own right. The Middle East topped the list (43%), followed closely by oil (41%), then the arms race (28%), world hunger (18%), interdependence and cooperation (16%), balance of trade (15%), Western Alliances (14%), and *detente* with the Soviet Union and China (12%).

This tendency on the part of public opinion to show greater concern for domestic issues is borne out by attitudes towards increasing or cutting federal spending, when a choice is implied between competing programs. The following table illustrates this point.

There is majority public support for greater spending on health, education, housing, and pollution control; leaders concur, though in a slightly different order. Meanwhile, the four areas of highest public support for cut backs are military aid, economic aid, defense spending, and CIA covert operations; leaders have a somewhat different list: farm subsidies, military aid, CIA covert operations, defense spending, and highway expenditures.

In terms of priorities for expanding/cutting back, public opinion would expand six domestic programs before any foreign one; leaders would expand five domestic programs first. On priorities for cutting back, the public names four foreign programs before reaching welfare; and leaders name three before reaching farm subsidies.

Yet despite these observations about the relative importance of domestic issues for the American people—and low public interest in the rest of the world—there is still strong support for a category of issues that reflect growing American interdependence with the rest of the world. For example, both leadership and public opinion strongly support the view that U.S. relations with other countries have a major impact on virtually every aspect of the economy at home, from prices for food and gasoline, to rates of unemployment.

There is also a significant sense of U.S. dependence on the rest of the world for the strength of our domestic economy. For example, 71% of public opinion believes that the U.S. depends "a lot" on the rest of the world for gasoline and oil; 41% for markets for manufactured products; and 30% as a source of raw materials for manufacture.

At the same time, the American public sees the rest of the world as being more dependent on us than the other way around—which should be expected, in view of past U.S. economic relations with the rest of the world. Ac-

TABLE I-2. The two or three biggest problems facing the country today that you would like to see the federal government do something about.

	Public %	Leaders %
ECONOMY	**80**	**85**
Inflation, high prices, high cost of living	56	54
Recession, unemployment	28	41
The economy	13	30
High cost of food, groceries	12	1
High interest rates	1	•
ENERGY CRISIS, OIL SHORTAGES	**11**	**45**
Energy crisis, fuel shortage	10	42
Problems with oil-producing countries, Arabs; too dependent on them for oil	1	4
FOREIGN POLICY	**13**	**23**
Should stop supporting other countries with foreign aid; should take care of this country's needs	8	2
U.S. foreign policy	3	7
World peace, disarmament	2	6
Too many imports; should use American products	1	•
Devaluation of the dollar	1	1
Middle East situation	1	8
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY; WORLD ECONOMY	**—**	**8**
GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION; REORGANIZATION	**15**	**17**
Corruption, dishonesty in government	10	10
Government should be overhauled, revamped	4	5
Country disorganized, in a mess	1	3
Salaries of public officials too high	1	1

•less than 0.5%

TABLE I-3. Here is a list of present federal government programs. For each, tell whether you feel it should be expanded, cut back or kept about the same.

	Expand %	Cut Back %	Keep Same %	Not Sure %
PUBLIC				
1. Aid to education	58	8	30	4
2. Health insurance	58	7	27	8
3. Housing	56	10	27	6
4. Pollution control	50	12	33	5
5. Farm subsidies	30	28	27	16
6. Welfare and relief programs at home	30	34	30	6
7. Highway expenditures	22	21	51	6
8. U.S. information programs abroad	17	23	37	23
9. Defense spending	14	42	38	6
10. General information gathering activities of the CIA	11	29	34	26
11. Economic aid to other nations	10	56	28	7
12. Secret political operations of the CIA	8	39	27	26
13. Military aid to other nations	3	70	20	7
LEADERS				
1. Housing	76	6	16	2
2. Health insurance	73	5	18	3
3. Aid to education	60	6	32	2
4. Pollution control	53	14	31	2
5. Economic aid to other nations	42	20	36	2
6. Welfare and relief programs at home	41	20	34	5
7. U.S. information programs abroad	21	25	49	5
8. Defense spending	10	56	33	1
9. Highway expenditures	7	56	35	1
10. General information gathering activities of the CIA	7	25	59	9
11. Farm subsidies	6	74	16	5
12. Secret political operations of CIA	2	66	23	9
13. Military aid to other nations	2	73	20	5

cording to the public sample, the rest of the world depends "a lot" on the United States for food supplies (84%); industrial know-how (77%); investment capital (76%); markets for manufactured products (73%); technological equipment (72%); and manufactured products (67%).

This growing sense of interdependence was reflected throughout the survey in answer to specific questions about actions the United States should take in relation to the rest of the world —as will be seen in later chapters. It is significant, however, that there was a greater awareness of, and support for, interdependence in the economic field, as opposed to those of military or security affairs. This trend of thinking parallels the growth of new economic security problems, coincident with the decline of military concerns deriving from the Second World War and its aftermath.

Thus if we redefine the idea of "foreign affairs" to reflect the shift in the nature of significant issues, then American public opinion is aware of the rest of the world, and also prepared to act based on that awareness.

But how does a growing sense of interdependence with the rest of the world translate into specific attitudes and actions? As later chapters indicate, there are many ambiguities and possible contradictions in attitudes, especially among the general public. There is also a significant disparity between leadership and public opinion on a number of issues, especially where there is a different level of interest or access to information. But the general proposition is still a valid one: that deepening U.S. domestic economic problems are stimulating greater public and leadership awareness of the limits to American independence from the rest of the world.

II. Foreign Policy Goals and Performance

How do American People and their leaders view the role of the United States in the world today? What should this role be in the future? What goals are deemed most important? And how well is the nation doing in reaching these goals?

INVOLVEMENT, NOT ISOLATION

Despite pronounced concern with domestic matters, the American public does not, by any means, advocate a withdrawal from world affairs. To be sure, a majority of the public sampled agree strongly with the statement that "America's real concerns should be at home, not abroad"; but a majority also agree that "the United States has a real responsibility to take a very active role in the world." There is also substantial sentiment that "we should build up our own defenses and let the rest of the world take care of itself"—but a majority disagree with the proposition that "the U.S. is rich and powerful enough to go it alone, without getting involved in the problems of the rest of the world." In sum, a substantial majority of the public (66%) feel that we should "take an active part" in world affairs, rather than "stay out." This figure has changed little in nearly 30 years.

Indeed, when asked what future role the U.S. should play in the world, a majority of the public (62%) responds that ten years from now we should play at least as important and powerful role as today. Far more want the United States to play a more important role, than want it to play a less important one.

At the same time, the public is often reluctant to invest money, effort, or manpower to support actions implied by an active U.S. role in the world. Should resources be put to domestic or foreign use? Most people want the effort to be made at home. On the basis of survey data, therefore, U.S. public opinion seems to define a U.S. role in the world as follows: peacekeeping through skillful negotiations and international cooperation—actions which hopefully will be effective, but also inexpensive.

Not surprisingly, U.S. leaders express even more support for an active foreign policy role for the United States. Fully 99% think it best for the future of the country for us to take an active part in world affairs, rather than stay out; 90% agree that the United States has a real responsibility to take a very active role; and few agree with isolationist sentiments, going it alone, or letting the rest of the world take care of itself. Many leaders (39%) want the U.S. to play a more important and powerful role ten years from now, whereas few (15%) favor a less important U.S. role.

It was also true of leaders that commitment to an active U.S. role in the world did not extend to many concrete steps involving the use of American money or manpower abroad. Leaders sampled, too, hope to promote American influence without great cost.

TABLE II-1. Whether it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs—The Public

	Better If We Take an Active Part in World Affairs	Better If We Stay Out of World Affairs	Not Sure
1974	66%	24%	10%
1955	72	21	7
1947	68	25	7

NOTE: Trend data from 1947 and 1955 come from national surveys conducted by NORC in Chicago. Responses from eight intervening surveys fall within this same range.

THE AIMS OF FOREIGN POLICY

Without question, the major foreign policy goals for the public are to keep peace in the world and to promote and defend U.S. security. Large majorities—85% and 83%, respectively—cite peacekeeping as *the* most important goal among the 18 listed. The leaders sampled agree, with even more emphasis: 95% and 91% cited peacekeeping and national security as "very important" goals; and a full 55% name peacekeeping as most important of all.

After security, the general public places foreign economic aims next in importance for the United States. Seventy-five percent of public opinion rates the securing of adequate energy supplies as "very important"; while 74% places the protecting of American workers' jobs in this category. Other economic goals are also rated as very important: these included fostering international cooperation to solve food, inflation and energy problems; helping to solve world inflation; and combatting world hunger. Leaders generally agree, although they tend to attach considerable less importance to protecting American jobs.

There is a tendency for goals that would directly help Americans—whether in terms of physical security or standard of living—to take precedence over goals involving the fate of other countries, such as protecting weaker

TABLE II-2. Importance of foreign policy goals for the United States—The Public

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important At All	Not Sure	Most Important
1. Keeping peace in the world	85%	11%	2%	2%	35%
2. Promoting and defending our own security	83	12	2	2	9
3. Securing adequate supplies of energy	75	18	2	5	3
4. Protecting the jobs of American workers	74	17	5	4	6
5. Fostering international cooperation to solve common problems, such as food, inflation and energy	67	24	3	6	14
6. Worldwide arms control	64	24	5	7	2
7. Helping solve world inflation	64	27	4	5	5
8. Combatting world hunger	61	31	5	3	5
9. Containing communism	54	27	13	6	7
10. Maintaining a balance of power among nations	48	34	8	10	2
11. Strengthening the United Nations	46	32	14	8	1
12. Helping to improve the standard of living in less developed countries	39	47	9	5	3
13. Protecting the interest of American business abroad	39	42	13	6	—
14. Strengthening countries who are friendly toward us	37	49	8	6	—
15. Defending our allies' security	33	50	9	8	—
16. Protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression	28	42	22	8	—
17. Helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations	28	53	11	8	—
18. Promoting the development of capitalism abroad	16	40	30	14	—
None					1
Not sure					7

TABLE II-3. Importance of foreign policy goals for the United States—Leaders

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important At All	Not Sure	Most Important
1. Keeping peace in the world	95%	4%	—	1%	55%
2. Promoting and defending our own security	91	7	1%	1	10
3. World wide arms control	86	12	1	1	4
4. Fostering international cooperation to solve common problems, such as food, inflation and energy	86	12	1	1	16
5. Helping solve world inflation	81	16	2	1	1
6. Securing adequate supplies of energy	77	21	1	1	2
7. Combatting world hunger	76	22	1	1	2
8. Helping to improve the standard of living in less developed countries	62	36	1	1	3
9. Maintaining a balance of power among nations	56	34	8	2	2
10. Defending our allies' security	47	49	2	2	—
11. Protecting the jobs of American workers	34	53	12	1	—
12. Containing communism	34	49	16	1	1
13. Strengthening the United Nations	31	44	24	1	—
14. Strengthening countries who are friendly toward us	28	66	5	1	—

TABLE II-3. Importance of foreign policy goals for the United States—Leaders

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important At All	Not Sure	Most Important
15. Protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression	35	60	6	1	—
16. Protecting the interests of American business abroad	17	64	18	1	1
17. Helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations	13	55	30	2	—
18. Promoting the development of capitalism abroad	9	44	45	2	—

nations against aggression, defending allies, security, or helping to improve the standard of living in less developed countries.

Perhaps most striking, however, traditional Cold War aims no longer seemed to have as much appeal either for public or leadership opinion. Containing communism is cited as very important by a majority of the public (54%—however, it ranks ninth in priority); and by a still smaller fraction of leaders (34%); strengthening countries friendly toward us is considered very important only by 37% of the public. Protecting the interests of American business abroad is very important to only 39% of the public and to 17% of the leaders. Both groups put at the bottom of the list the exportation of the American way of life in terms either of bringing a democratic form of government to other nations, or of promoting the development of capitalism abroad.

On balance, the selection of goals seems to indicate partly a turning inward and partly a tempering of American messianism. Many see foreign policy more as a tool to serve certain particular U.S. interests—and are turning away from conflict with communism abroad as a preeminent foreign policy goal.

This conclusion is also evident in views of the importance for the United States to be a world leader in various respects. The public strongly endorses capabilities for peacekeeping—especially skill in negotiating settlements that avoid war (and, to a lesser extent, military strength)—as "very important" areas for U.S. world leadership. On the economic front, public opinion cites economic strength as the most important area for U.S. leadership more often than any other area. Scientific and technological progress, and standard of living, are also rated as important areas for U.S. leadership.

U.S leaders largely agree that economic and peacekeeping capabilities are chief areas for American leadership. However, their attitudes differ from public opinion in assigning very great importance to leadership in moral values. About one quarter (23%) of the leaders cite moral values as the most important of all.

ASSESSMENTS OF PAST PERFORMANCE

How does public and leadership opinion assess American success in achieving foreign policy goals? The public sampled gave mixed reviews. While many overall ratings could be labelled "positive," the number of "excellent" ratings was very small: never more than 16% for any one of the 18 goals sampled, and more often around 6%. Public opinion, in short, is generally unimpressed with American foreign policy performance. Leaders are even less approving.

However, this discontent with U.S. efforts does not center on achievements in keeping peace in the world, in promoting and defending our own security (or, to a lesser extent, in securing worldwide arms control). In these areas, pub-

TABLE II-4. Positive ratings of job U.S. is doing in achieving foreign policy goals

	Public %	Leaders %
Promoting and defending our own security	71	83
Defending our allies' security	66	78
Keeping peace in the world	60	73
Strengthening countries who are friendly toward us	58	57
Helping to improve the standard of living in less developed countries	56	26
Maintaining a balance of power among nations	54	74
Containing communism	54	84
World-wide arms control	53	37
Protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression	53	59
Protecting the interests of American business abroad	53	53
Promoting the development of capitalism abroad	33	32
Strengthening the United Nations	47	18
Fostering international cooperation to solve common problems, such as food, inflation and energy	44	33
Combating world hunger	40	20
Helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations	40	14
Controlling the flow of refugees	38	9
Protecting the rights of minorities	37	7
Promoting world trade	35	8

lic opinion feels we were doing at least "a pretty good" job. (Leaders agree even more strongly except on arms control.)

The bulk of public unhappiness centers on a belief in failure to attain U.S. *economic* objectives. Only 24% of the public, for example, thinks that the U.S. is currently doing a pretty good (or excellent) job at helping to solve world inflation; fully 35% rated the results as "poor." Only a minority thinks the U.S. is doing a good job at fostering international cooperation to solve such problems as food, inflation, and energy. A majority thinks that the U.S. is doing only a fair—or poor—job at securing adequate supplies of energy. And in a matter of particular concern to the public—protecting American jobs—only 35% thinks the U.S. is doing well; 58% rates the effort only fair or poor.

On all of these economic matters, leaders also give negative ratings, and in fact, were more likely to give ratings of "poor." Thirty-two percent of leaders rate U.S. performance as poor on securing adequate supplies of energy, and a full 55% give a poor rating on helping to solve world-wide inflation.

On some goals of lesser concern, too—such as combatting world hunger, and improving the standard of living in less developed countries—there are substantial negative ratings, especially by leaders.

Some other findings in the study—such as the positive evaluations of the Secretary of State—suggest that only part of public discontent has so far led to blaming particular foreign policy leaders. Yet the discontent is real, indicating a popular desire for greater achievements in reaching specific goals.

III. Attitudes Toward U.S. Military Involvement

During the past several years, there has been a substantial change in U.S. military policy. The Vietnam War is over for the United States; there is *detente* with the Russians; there is a limited rapprochment with China; the draft has come to an end; and economic factors demand far more attention than during the Cold War—in part because of the Cold War's end.

It is not unreasonable, therefore, to expect major changes in public attiudes towards the role of U.S. military involvement in the world, and at the same time, toward the size and composition of the defense budget.

THE DEFENSE BUDGET

What do the American public and leaders feel about the place that the defense budget should play in our society? Is the defense budget too large? The right size? Or too small?

Direct questions in the survey on this subject elicited the following response among the public sampled: 13% think the defense budget should be expanded, 47% feel that it should be kept about the same, and 32% feel that it should be reduced. But there is an important disparity on this question between leadership and public opinion, with leaders favoring a *reduced* military effort by a much higher percentage: only 8% feel the budget should be expanded, 36% feel it should be kept the same, while 56% feel it should be cut back.

Further, 34% of leaders put defense spending on a list of the first one or two federal programs that should be cut back; while 17% of public opinion express this preference for priority defense reductions. (This latter figure is still significant, however, since only foreign economic and military aid cuts receive a higher priority in public opinion.)

TABLE III-1. Defense spending

	Public			Leaders		
	Spend More	Spend Same	Spend Less	Spend More	Spend Same	Spend Less
Defense on its own	13%	47%	32%	8%	36%	56%
Defense in the context of other spending	14	38	42	10	33	56

What explains the general difference in view on the importance of defense cuts? The answer is partly economic: to begin with, the perceived relationship between defense spending and unemployment. When asked if they favored cutbacks—if that would mean increasing unemployment—46% of the public originally favoring a cutback changed their minds, while only 20% of the leaders originally favoring a cutback followed suit.

When the opposite question—assuming *no* unemployment from a defense budget cut—was asked of people who originally favored expanding the defense budget or keeping it the same, then 21% of the public respondents changed their minds, while only a tiny 4% of leaders did so.

Thus it appears that the issue of unemployment does not play a decisive role in leaders' views of the size of the defense budget, while the unemployment factor plays an important role in public attitudes (when a link between defense cutbacks and a loss of jobs is explicitly made). It may be that most leaders are aware of this link and took it into account in their initial answers.

There is also a difference between leadership and public opinion on a further economic aspect of defense spending. This becomes clear on comparing responses to the above question ("should we expand/cut back our spending on national defense?") with responses to a similar question, asking which items on a list of federal programs, *including* defense spending, should be expanded or cut back.

In the second question, the trade-offs were implied, though not made explicit. Yet few leaders changed their minds; while the public significantly favored spending less on defense when the full spectrum of alternative uses of federal revenues was presented.

Both groups of respondents were also questioned on the relationship between defense spending and American military strength, relative to that of the Soviet Union. Fifty-nine percent of the public who had favored cutting back the defense budget changed their minds when this would entail our military strength falling behind that of the Soviet Union. Fifty-seven percent of the leaders originally favoring cutbacks also changed their minds.

At the same time, 40% of the public respondents who had favored expanding the defense budget or keeping it the same changed their minds when the contingency was presented that this would *not* mean that our military strength would fall behind that of the Soviet Union. Among the comparable group of leaders, fully 66% changed their minds.

Thus it appears that, concerning attitudes on the defense budget, the issue of U.S. military strength in comparison to that of the Soviet Union is a more potent factor for both leaders and public opinion than is the issue of unemployment. However, leaders sampled were less concerned than the general public about problems of unemployment—or else they were unconvinced that unemployment would result from defense cuts. Furthermore, leaders are more willing than the general public to cut defense if this would not mean our falling behind the Russians. Both groups seem to be willing to exploit a real spirit of *detente* but with greater confidence in it on the part of leadership.

U.S. MILITARY STRENGTH

Closely related to the question of United States prestige and relative military strength are attitudes about the importance of leadership in various fields.

Both public opinion and the leaders sampled place a high value on the United States' being a leading military power in the world. Sixty-nine percent of the public, and 73% of leaders, feel that it is "very important" for the United States to be a world leader in military strength. By contrast, only 36% of each sample think it "very important" for us to be a world leader in "willingness to make military commitments to other countries and to keep them," (at least "somewhat important" leaders. 84%, public 75%).

These data may not reflect a move towards isolationism—but they do seem to mean a move towards earlier views of U.S. self-reliance rather than a far-flung set of commitments. The public and the leaders diverge widely on this, however; when they are confronted with a direct question: 26% of the public and 85% of the leaders strongly disagree with the proposition that "The United States is rich and powerful enough to go it alone, without getting involved in the problems of the rest of the world."

Yet there is less divergence of views between leaders and public opinion on a related issue: "when a country feels that what it believes in is right . . . having the power to get what you want is what really counts, today." Among public opinion, 66% agree with this proposition (33% strongly) and 27% do not; while among leaders, 55% agree (19% strongly) and 43% disagree.

This strand of "realpolitik" is even more strongly in evidence in responses to the following statement: "The only way peace can exist in this world is when a country like the United States who wants peace is strong enough to back up warnings to possible aggressor nations that they can't get away with aggression." This does not imply actual military involvement, but rather the strength to deter. Here, there is a remarkably similar response by both samples, with public opinion agreeing by 74% for (43% strongly) and 15% against; and with leaders agreeing by 77% for (40% strongly) to 20% against.

U.S. MILITARY COMMITMENTS ABROAD—IN GENERAL

How do the American people and their leaders view U.S. military involvement overseas? It has been noted that only a modest 36% of public opinion and leaders sampled rate a willingness to make military commitments to other countries and to keep them as being "very important." But what should the United States do "if friendly countries are attacked"?

This table, coupled with earlier data, indicates that the general public seem to combine support for a strong defense with a decided reluctance actually to get involved in combat, or in steps that could lead to combat—perhaps as an extension of aid commitments. Leadership opinion, meanwhile, is more internally consistent: the degree of its support for a strong defense is more closely correlated with a willingness to commit forces if friendly countries are attacked. But neither group rates the importance of American military *involvement* as anything like the importance of military *strength*.

The aversion to U.S. combat involvement would appear, on the face of it, to have its roots in the Vietnam War experience. This is borne out by comparison of responses above to attitudes toward the Vietnam War. First, only 8% of the public think that the Vietnam War was a "proud moment" in American history; 72% think it was a "dark moment"; and 15% chose neither view. Within these categories, responses to "attacks on friendly countries" divide as follows:

TABLE III-2. U.S. response to attacks on friendly countries

	Public %	Leaders %
Send military and economic aid, plus troops	23	34
Military and economic aid only	37	47
Economic aid only	22	6
Nothing	9	1
Not sure	9	12

TABLE III-3. Views of the Vietnam War—The Public

Comparison:	Proud Moment (8%)	Neither (15%)	Dark Moment (72%)
If friendly countries are attacked—The Public			
Send military and economic aid, plus troops	45%	33%	18%
Economic aid only	12	12	35
Military and economic aid only	27	38	40
Nothing	4	7	10
Not sure	12	10	7

People who see the Vietnam War as a "proud moment" are substantially more likely to favor circumstances that might lead to its repetition elsewhere, than were people who think of it as a "dark moment." Conversely, the latter are substantially more inclined to do nothing, or to limit our response to economic aid, than were the former—and they are less likely to be without an opinion on the matter!

U.S. MILITARY COMMITMENTS ABROAD—IN PARTICULAR

One-half of the public shares the view that the United States should keep its commitment to NATO in its current state—a position which was held by 62% of leaders. An additional 4% of the public (and 5% of the leaders) believe that we should increase that commitment. On the other side, 13% of the public (and 29% of leaders) think we should decrease our commitment to NATO; and only 7% of the public and 2% of leaders think we should withdraw altogether. (Of course, leadership views on decreasing support for NATO may reflect expressed willingness to negotiate reductions in both United States and Soviet European forces.)

However, this margin of support for our general commitment to NATO does not hold up in the face of specific probing into the circumstances that might justify U.S. military involvement, including the use of U.S. troops.

The following table speaks eloquently: only an invasion of Canada would evoke majority public support, and only that and an invasion of Western Europe (or a Soviet takeover of West Berlin) would evoke the majority support of leaders sampled. Of course, these questions do not take account of the popular and political climate that might prevail if any of these possibilities came to pass, nor the popular reaction to an appeal by the President or Secretary of State. In a time of peace, it is difficult to predict reactions in a future time of crisis. Yet the present reluctance to continue our post-World War II role in military security abroad is striking.

There are large differences between leadership and public support for United States involvement in five areas listed in this table: 13% difference for Canada, 38% Western Europe, 21% Berlin, 11% Cuba and 14% Israel. (In two of these cases the differences are potentially quite important: a majority of the leaders favor military involvement in case of attack on Western Europe or West Berlin, while only a minority of the general public—despite its attitudes towards NATO—are so inclined.) Only in three areas, (where communist countries are involved and these of a low order or priority), does public opinion in favor of a U.S. military and troop commitment outweigh leadership opinion.

(A word is in order concerning the relatively high number of "not sures" in both the leadership and public samples. For the public sample, only two contingencies did not approach one-quarter "not sures": invasion of Canada —close to home, but a most unlikely contingency; and Vietnam—where the reality of fighting is most recently vivid for Americans. But given the hypothetical nature of most of the problems mentioned, and the significance of the issues involved, being "not sure" might be construed as being a reasonable and considered response.)

Among those areas listed in the table where the United States might actually be called upon to act, two stand out in contrasting low public support and higher leadership support for military action: Western Europe and Israel. At the same time, leadership and public opinion are in near agreement on withholding support for the use of arms to defend Europe's and Japan's oil.

TABLE III-4. Circumstances under which favor or oppose U.S. military involvement, including the use of U.S. troops

	Public			Leaders		
	Favor %	Oppose %	Not Sure %	Favor %	Oppose %	Not Sure %
If Canada were invaded	77	12	11	90	4	6
If Western Europe were invaded	39	41	20	77	14	9
If the Russians took over West Berlin	34	43	23	55	33	12
If Castro's Cuba invaded the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean	32	44	24	43	46	11
If Israel were being defeated by the Arabs	27	50	23	41	44	15
If the Arabs cut off the oil supply to Western Europe	21	56	23	22	65	13
If North Korea attacked South Korea	14	65	21	19	67	14
If Communist China attacked India	16	59	25	17	70	13
If the Arabs cut off the oil supply to Japan	14	63	23	15	70	15
If Communist China invaded Formosa (Taiwan)	12	59	34	11	79	10
If the Soviet Union Attacked Yugoslavia after Tito's death	11	65	24	8	82	10
If North Vietnam launched a major attack against Saigon	11	72	16	6	87	7

In general, there is low public support for defending areas where war might actually occur, and United States commitments or interests actually tested.

Further questions were asked concerning attitudes toward the use of force in connection with Middle East oil. Only 25% of the public expressed a personal willingness to "support the use of military force by the oil-consuming countries, such as the U.S., Western Europe and Japan, to take oil out of the hands of the Arabs." A total of 59% are not willing to go that far. The question did not cite contingencies, such as high prices or a future embargo—"economic strangulation"—which have become a point of public dispute recently. Yet it did seek to explore the impact of Administration endorsement of such action: respondents who were not willing or not sure were then asked about their willingness in the event that the President and the Secretary of State asked for support. Even with this added factor, less than a third (32%) of the public were willing to endorse military force against the Arab oil-producing countries.

A further question underscores the low popularity of war as a tool for securing oil supplies. In the event of a further Arab embargo against the United States, Western Europe and Japan, only 6% of public opinion would choose invasion rather than some less drastic course (40% "share our oil with others"; 38% "go it alone"; 16% "not sure). Leadership opinion would choose invasion even less (4%), although it favors greater cooperation with other consumers (83% share; 10% "go it alone"; 3% "not sure").

MILITARY AID AND THE SALE OF ARMS

There is also the question of indirect U.S. involvement in possible foreign conflict—or support of foreign governments—through the providing of military aid. "Military aid to other nations" does not stand in high esteem, with 70% of the public sample and 73% of the leadership sample in favor of cuts. Military aid also ranks first among public opinion and second (after defense spending itself) among the leadership sample as the program to be cut back first. Significantly, however, in answer to a free-response question (regarding the drawbacks of United States aid to foreign nations), 19% of leaders cited "too much military/warfare aid," while only 4% of public opinion cited this factor. In part, this may reflect low public awareness of *military* aid as a component of *foreign* aid when the latter term is used alone. (The benefits of "foreign aid"—again undifferentiated—are at the same time seen as "peace" by 6% of the public sample, and to "prevent wars" by 17% of the leaders.)

Opinion on military aid to other nations is not quite so negative, at least among leaders, when the option stands alone rather than when it is put in the context of competing federal programs. Fifty-two percent of leaders oppose it on its own and 40% favor it. Among the general public, however, 65% oppose it and 22% favor it as a single option.

There is widespread belief that foreign military aid has some beneficial effect. Fully 69% of the public (80% of leaders) respond that this aid helps the national security of other countries; 60% (48% leaders) that it helps the economy of other countries, 49% (32% leaders) that it helps people in other countries live better; 44% (66% leaders) that it is a good substitute for the use of American troops and manpower; and 43% (65% leaders) that it strengthens our political friends abroad. Even the last item on the list—helps our economy at home—receives 31% public support (61% leaders). In one other area, leadership opinion registers a positive endorsement: helps our national security (55% to 36% of the public sample). But many of these effects seem to be only of secondary importance in evaluating aid.

The cleavage between public and leadership opinion on every issue in this list may reflect greater leadership confidence in the value of foreign military aid when its practical security, political and domestic effects are calculated. Why this should be so is not evident from the data other, perhaps, than the different sources of information available to leaders and the public at large.

The most striking differences between leadership and public opinion on negative effects of foreign military aid lie with its impact on the U.S. domestic economy: 54% of the public believe that it hurts our economy at home, compared to only 29% of the leaders who view it this way.

In deciding whether or not they favor military aid, for most people the *overriding consideration is the effect of this aid on our own national security*. People who believe military aid helps our own national security tend to support it: 66% do so. People who believe military aid does *not* help our own national security tend to *oppose* it: 65% do so. The story is told by the fact that 51% of the American people (36% disagree) do *not* think that military aid helps our own national security: they therefore oppose it.

Finally, the basic divergence between leadership and public opinion on support for foreign military aid is repeated with arms sales to other nations by the U.S. government. For both groups it is more popular (58% of leaders and 35% of the public support it) than is military aid—presumably for economic reasons, but also perhaps because of the greater "arms length" distance it may provide the United States from direct involvement in foreign conflict. But the program still does not have the support of a majority of the public.

THE HISTORY OF U.S. MILITARY POLICY—THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE

In part, the way in which people today regard U.S. military policy, the defense budget, and foreign military aid will reflect views of U.S. actions in the past, and the impact of past actions on America's current place in the world. Public attitudes on this point are illustrated by the following table.

TABLE III-5. Proud and dark moments in American foreign policy history

	Proud	Neither	Dark	Don't Know
World War II	68%	11%	13%	8%
Korean War	22	27	41	10
Dominican Intervention	9	27	20	44
Vietnam War	8	15	72	5

These negative evaluations of our recent military history can be contrasted with the size of public support for the U.S. role in founding the United Nations (81%); President Kennedy's handling of the Cuban Missile Crisis (52%); the Berlin Airlift (52%); and U.S. support for Israel in October 1973 (42%).

Part of the reason for these negative judgments may be explained by the passage of time. But are there other factors, relating to views of war itself—and of America's self-image—that must be taken into account?

It would be helpful here to look further at specific attitudes on our most recent war—where memories are most vivid and lessons most likely to be applied to broader situations. First, public opinion is evenly divided, only about half (42% yes to 44% no) finding that Vietnam taught us we should not enter wars we cannot win (the leadership sample more firmly rejects this proposition, 38% to 55%).

Yet, at the same time, there is a sense of the *limitations of power* in certain kinds of war—that we have *not* learned from Vietnam that we could "stop aggressors who would take over our smaller allies" (35% to 45%, while leaders reflect a striking 24% and 69% against this proposition). In contrast, there is a plurality public view about the way in which the Vietnam War was conducted: opposition to "tying the hands" of the military. By 41% to 35%, the public sampled say they learned that this was the wrong way to fight a war—while the proposition is overwhelmingly rejected by U.S. leaders (by 15% to 79%).

More important than general lessons of Vietnam, to be applied to other situations, are the *specific qualities* of that conflict. Sixty-seven percent of public opinion (63% of leaders) learned from Vietnam that we should not support corrupt regimes; and 63% (72% leaders), that we should stay out of civil wars.

What then should we do? By 59% to 26% the public sampled think we have learned from Vietnam that we should send arms and supplies rather than lose men (leaders 51% to 35%).

Yet there is a further contrast, when the issue is broadened to include the general proposition of backing regimes we don't like, because a "communist takeover would be worse." Here, there is majority public support (52% to 32%) for this as a lesson of Vietnam—despite the overwhelming rejection of Vietnam as a dark moment in American foreign policy history (leaders divided 36% to 58% against this as a lesson of Vietnam).

In general, however, the "lessons of Vietnam" do not apply to overall political—or at least non-military—attitudes about a future U.S. role in the outside world. Among the public sampled on whether or not Vietnam was a proud or a dark moment, there is little variation in support of our taking an active role in the world (76% of those who chose "proud"; 70% who chose "neither"; 65% who chose "dark")—while U.S. leaders give the strongest response here to any question in the survey, a full 99% favor an active role.

THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY

Attitudes toward the American defense effort and U.S. military involvement can also be inferred from views of the role that military leaders (and others) do and should play in determining United States foreign policy. Here it is too hard to determine views accurately because of different concepts about which leaders would favor or oppose one or another action in the defense budget and military areas.

Fully 76% of the public believe that the military plays an important role in determining U.S. foreign policy (though only 36% rate it "very important," compared to 73% for the Secretary of State). Eighty-three percent of leaders, meanwhile, see the military as playing an important role (though only 34% rate it "very important").

What should be done about this role? The public sampled divide as follows: 19% want to make it more important; 43% want to keep it the same; 27% want to make it less important, for a balance of 8% in favor of a lesser role for the military. Leaders, however, are substantially in favor of a lesser role; only 4% believe the military should be more important than it is now and 55% believe it should be less important, for a balance of 51% for a lesser role.

Again, these statistics seem to support earlier conclusions about differences between public and leadership views on the desirability of cutting the defense budget.

IV. Attitudes Toward Political Relationships and Commitments Abroad

While the American people's perspectives on foreign policy have apparently undergone a substantial "demilitarization," there is no conclusive evidence of a concomitant desire to back away from international political relationships. We do not find a repetition of the post-World War I experience, when the U.S. withdrew politically as well as militarily. Rather, we find a portrait of a "post-imperial" foreign policy for the United States.

To begin with, there is strong support among the American people for the kind of cooperative international relationships and the peace-keeping activities that have been characteristic of U.S. foreign policy over the past generation. Eighty-two percent of the national sample, and 95% of the leadership sample, agreed with the statement that "problems like food, energy and inflation are so big that no country can solve them alone, and international cooperation is the only way we can make progress in solving these problems." On the subject of alliances, 51% of the national sample and 81% of the leaders thought that the U.S. should consult with its major allies before making any major foreign policy decisions. A substantial 86% of the national sample and 97% of the leaders also agreed with the view that the United States has a real responsibility to take a very active role in the world.

The American public is ambivalent about formal international organizations; supporting the principles and procedures rather more than the institutions themselves. Eighty-two percent of the respondents regarded the U.S. role in founding the United Nations as a proud moment in American history, but only 53% thought that it was "very important" for the United States to be a world leader in support of international organizations, such as the U.N. Three-fifths of both samples agreed with the following divergent proposals!

(1) "the U.N. is good in theory, but the real way to keep peace in the world is to have the super powers such as the United States and the Soviet Union agree that they will not allow other countries to wage war" (62% to 24% for the public, 61% to 34% for the leadership),

and

(2) "we should conduct more and more of our foreign affairs through genuinely international organizations" (60% to 23% for the public, 58% to 41% for the leadership).

Americans place more faith in international organizations like the U.N. when it comes to questions related to food, energy and inflation, than on keeping the peace.

But if there is ambivalence about international institutions, there is little doubt about the importance that people attach to peacekeeping activities and to favorable political relations with other countries: 82% of the national sample (and 91% of the leadership sample) believe that it is "very important" for the U.S. to be a world leader in "skill in negotiating settlements that avoid war." And when they were asked how important it was to have good relations with major countries and regions of the world, the responses, among the general public particularly, were impressive. While these are not controversial questions, they do suggest how widespread is the desire for peace and for friendly relations with other nations.

TABLE IV-1. Importance of having good relations with different nations and regions

	Very Important	
	Public	Leaders
Western Europe	75%	97%
Soviet Union	71	86
Japan	70	92
Arab Countries	68	76
Asia	63	60
Latin America	62	63
Africa	56	44

The "demilitarization" of American foreign policy attitudes suggested by the other data in this survey is manifested in the diminished antagonism and hostility of American public opinion toward certain communist countries. This is evident in the attitudes toward the Soviet Union reflected in the immediately preceding table. It is also clear in the responses to other questions: 58% of the public think that it is possible for the United States and Russia to reach long-term agreements to keep peace and when confronted with nine proposals for specific agreements (e.g., equal trade treatment, mutual reduction of troops in Europe, joint space missions) favorable majorities of between 60% and 83% were recorded among the public sample, and of between 85% and 97% among the leadership sample.

In view of the recent actions of both governments in the matter of "Most Favored Nation" (MFN) treatment for the Soviet Union, it is worth noting that the public favored giving the Soviet

Union the same trade treatment we give other countries by 62% to 24%, with 14% not sure. The leadership sample favored this proposal by a more substantial 85% to 13%, with only 3% undecided. Additionally, 72% of the public and 91% of the leaders were recorded as agreeing that we should work with the Soviet Union to keep smaller countries from going to war.

Comparable support is registered for an improvement of relations with other communist countries. Fifty-three percent of the national sample, and 84% of the leaders, favor the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Cuba. Eighty-two percent and 96% respectively agree that we have to learn to live with countries like the Soviet Union and communist China, and nearly 60% of the national sample regard former President Nixon's trip to Peking as a proud moment in American history. Fifty-five percent of the public and 76% of the leaders think that the United States and communist China can reach long-term agreements to keep the peace.

Communism is still a threatening phenomenon to at least a substantial minority of the population, even if we seem to have stabilized our relations with some particular communist countries. Thirty-six percent of the public believes that economic aid helps to prevent the spread of communism, and an equal proportion believes that military aid does likewise; this belief contributes to support for aid—especially military. In reviewing the "lessons of the Vietnam War," 51% of the national sample (but only 36% of the leaders) felt that the Vietnam War had taught us that we sometimes have to back governments we don't like because a communist takeover would be worse. Fifty-four percent of the national sample though that containing communism was a very important foreign policy goal for the United States (to be sure, many more thought other goals very important), and an additional 27% rated it as somewhat important. (The comparable figures for the leadership group were 34% and 48%.)

Most members of the public felt that if European countries in general were to become communist, it would be a threat to the United States. Fifty percent of the public considered a communist take-over in Italy a threat to the United States, and 47% concluded the same on Portugal.

TABLE IV-2. Reactions to possible communist takeovers

	Threat to U.S.		No Threat		Not Sure	
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
Western European Countries	71%	68%	19%	25%	10%	7%
Latin American Countries	69	54	20	36	11	9
Japan	67	66	23	28	10	6
African Countries	51	30	34	62	14	8
Italy	50	45	36	47	14	8
Portugal	47	36	38	55	14	8

The attitudes reported here are consistent with former President Nixon's virtual declaration, in Peking and Moscow, that the Cold War was over, and with the measures of *detente* that have taken place since then. It is not unreasonable to attribute some part of the demilitarization of foreign policy attitudes to this changed state of formal political relations. The consequences of these changes have a bearing not only on the range of political possibilities that the American people are willing seriously to entertain, but also (and a little less reassuringly) on the stability of current attitudes, on an attendant loss of certitude and familiar bearings, as the formulas and rhetoric of the Cold War era have been discarded.

The uncertainty is visible, for example, in responses to such questions as how we as a nation should deal with other countries that violate human rights—questions which used to be subordinated to the overriding dictates of the Cold War competition.

When attitudes toward the violation of human rights are probed in the abstract, support for the human rights position is substantial. Sixty-seven percent of the national sample (and 87% of the leadership sample) agree with the statement that "the United States should put pressure on countries which systematically violate basic human rights." Sixty-four percent of both samples feel that, even if there is some advantage to the United States, it is not justified to back authoritarian governments that have overthrown democratic governments. And nearly three-fourths of both samples agree that it is "morally wrong for the United States to support a military dictatorship that strips its people of their basic rights, even if that dictatorship will allow us to set up military bases in that country." (Since military bases do not currently command much public support, the cross-pressures implicit in this question may in fact be operating rather as *joint* pressures, pushing the proportions who are against supporting such military dictatorships to these high levels.) In any event, when it comes to specifics the public response is less clear.

Popular attitudes on the question of whether "we should take a more active role in opposing the policy of apartheid —that is, racial separation—in South Africa" show a plurality in disagreement; 35% agree, 43% disagree and 22% are not sure. On the matter of the Soviet treatment of minorities 41% of the national sample agree that "how the Soviet Union handles the treatment of the Jews and other minority groups is a matter of internal Soviet politics, and none of our business," while 48% disagree with that hands-off position. Among the leaders, 34% agree that it is none of our business, while 64% disagree. These views contrast with near unanimity on the part of leaders for expanding trade with the Soviet Union, while two-thirds of the public concur. Thus there is popular support for the emigration objective of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment; but even stronger support for the expanding trade on which that amendment places conditions.

We have seen in the preceding section that the American people are reluctant to invest in or to depend on certain military means to accomplish

their foreign policy goals. And we will see in the following section that while economic means are more acceptable than military, there is no unlimited enthusiasm for them either. The economy, in fact, has become the *object* of foreign policy, rather than its instrument.

What can we conclude here as to the political means that the people are willing to accept as appropriate for achieving their foreign policy objectives? Figures cited above indicate that there is strong support for traditional diplomacy—for negotiating skills—and for multilateral cooperation in attacking new and complex world problems. But the population is more divided on clandestine political interventions by the Central Intelligence Agency. When asked whether the secret political operations of the CIA should be expanded, cut back, or kept about the same, both the national sample and the leadership sample tended to favor cutbacks.

TABLE IV-3. Secret political operations of the CIA should be:

	Expanded	Cut Back	Kept about the same	Not Sure
Public	8%	39%	27%	26%
Leaders	2%	66%	23%	9%

But when asked, "In general, do you feel that the CIA should or should not work inside other countries to try to strengthen those elements that serve the interests of the United States and to weaken those forces that work against the interests of the U.S.?" the sample broke down as follows:

Forty percent of the public saw C.I.A. involvement in Chile as a dark moment for the U.S.—as against only 7% calling it a proud moment. Thus the general public apparently is more supportive and also more uncertain—about covert political action than are the leaders, the majority of whom believe that it should be cut back.

TABLE IV-4. Should the CIA work inside other countries?

	Should	Should Not	Not Sure
Public	43%	26%	31%
Leaders	35%	59%	6%

V. Economic Affairs

The greatest concern today of the American people—as we have seen—is with the U.S. economy. The most frequently mentioned "biggest problems" facing the country today were inflation, rising costs, recession and unemployment, and food and energy resources. Leaders shared these concerns.

This preoccupation with the American economy has two different, though related, implications for foreign policy. The public—and leaders as well—were reluctant to invest money and resources in foreign policy ventures rather than using that money at home. At the same time, however, there was a desire to use foreign policy actively to benefit the U.S. and world economies.

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS: INTERDEPENDENCE, COOPERATION, AND SACRIFICE

This desire rested on a perceived web of economic interdependence among nations—a perception that in some cases may exceed the objective situation. Most members of the public were aware of the rest of the world's dependence on the U.S. for food supplies, investment funds, and technology: 84%, 76%, and 72%, respectively of those surveyed concluded that the rest of the world depends "a lot" on the U.S. in those respects. They were also aware of American dependence on the rest of the world for gasoline and oil (71% seeing "a lot" of dependence), and for markets to sell manufactured products (41%) and as sources of raw materials for manufacturing (30%). Overwhelming majorities of over 80% saw the U.S. as at least "a little" dependent in these respects, and majorities saw some U.S. dependence on the rest of the world for manufactured products and food supplies.

Consequently, most Americans saw U.S. foreign policy as having a significant impact on the U.S. economy. Fully 87% saw a "major impact" of foreign policy on gasoline prices at home; 78% on the value of the dollar abroad; and 77% on the overall economy at home and on food prices. Large majorities also perceived a major impact on such matters as the sale of American products abroad (69%), supplies of raw materials for manufacturing (64%), the price of manufactured products at home (63%), unemployment (59%) and interest rates (56%). The leaders sampled largely agreed with these estimates.

The public therefore supported a number of foreign policy measures aimed at alleviating our own and the world's economic difficulties. Foremost among these were efforts at cooperation with our traditional allies among the advanced industrialized nations.

Eighty percent of the public favors oil consuming nations such as the U.S. Canada, Western Europe and Japan, getting together to develop strategies that would make us less dependent on the decisions of the foreign oil producing countries. Popular support for such cooperative efforts remained at the same high level even if it meant that we would all have to cut back our own gasoline consumption by 10%. And a slight majority still favored such cooperation if it meant spending U.S. tax dollars to support it. Foreign policy leaders were even more overwhelmingly in favor of such efforts.

Similarly, a large majority (83%) of the public favored making agreements with the Soviet Union to undertake joint efforts to solve the world energy shortage.

However, a plurality (39%) of the public was opposed to extending easy-term loans to developing countries that had large balance of payments deficits due to the high cost of oil. Over three-fifths (63%) of the 31% who favored such loans continued to favor them if it meant spending U.S. tax dollars, but that amounted to only about 20% of the public. On this matter the leaders

TABLE V-1. Cooperation on energy problems

	Favor		Oppose		Not Sure	
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
Should oil-consuming nations get together?	80	97	6	1	14	2
Should oil-consuming nations get together, if it meant cutting back gasoline consumption 10%?	80	97	13	2	7	1
Should oil-consuming nations get together, if it meant spending U.S. tax dollars to support it?	54	91	34	5	12	4
Should we undertake joint efforts with the Soviet Union to solve the world energy shortage?	83	93	10	4	7	3

were substantially more willing to act: 72% favored such loans, and 93% of those continued to do so even if it meant spending U.S. tax dollars.

The public reactions indicate clearly —as noted in the section on military policy—that support for action to help the U.S. economy stopped short of the use of military force against the Arab oil-producing nations. Only 14% of the public favored U.S. military action if the Arabs cut off the oil supply to Japan—63% opposed it, and only 21% favored military involvement if the Arabs cut off the oil supply to Western Europe with 56% opposed. Even if the U.S. and other countries were faced with another oil embargo, only 6% favored invading the oil-producing countries; a plurality preferred to share our oil with Europe and Japan, even if it means less oil for Americans. Leaders preferred sharing by overwhelming ratios.

In addition to cooperative efforts to deal with economic problems (especially energy), the American public was prepared to make some unilateral sacrifices as well. A strong majority (87%) was willing to spend tax dollars to develop new energy sources, such as solar and coal, in order to become less dependent on foreign oil. Solid majorities expressed willingness to cut back on consumption of gasoline by 10% (78%); to go without meat one day a week in order to send food abroad to combat shortages; (75%) to cut out nonessential fertilizer (68%); and to accept a system of gasoline rationing (59%). For the most part, people saw not only themselves but also the people they knew as willing to make such sacrifices.

To some degree American leaders underestimated the willingness of the general public to sacrifice, particularly concerning the use of fertilizer and the consumption of meat. But, as the leaders correctly perceived, most Americans were highly reluctant to pay more for food in order to send food abroad: 70% said that they would personally not be willing to pay 10% more for food for that purpose. Indeed, the leaders were over optimistic in gauging public acceptance of a gasoline tax. A 25¢ per gallon tax was strongly opposed (62% not willing) even when it carried a refund on the income tax; and a 10¢ per gallon tax received acceptance only from 50%.

TABLE V-2. Preferred policies if U.S., Western Europe and Japan were faced with another Arab oil embargo

	Public %	Leaders %
Share our oil with Europe and Japan, even if it means less oil for Americans	40	83
Go it alone, and let Europe and Japan fend for themselves	38	10
Invade the oil-producing countries	6	4
Not sure	16	3

TABLE V-3. Willingness to accept measures dealing with the oil shortage—The Public

Measures to deal with oil shortage and dependence on oil-producing countries	Personal Willingness			Willingness If Asked By The President And Secretary of State		
	Would Be Willing %	Not Willing %	Not Sure %	Would Be Willing %	Not Willing %	Not Sure %
Spend tax dollars at home to develop new energy sources such as the use of solar rays and new coal technology, so that we become less dependent on foreign countries for gasoline	87	8	5	89	7	4
Cut back our consumption of gasoline by 10%, if it would reduce the amount of money we as a nation spend abroad for oil	78	17	5	83	13	4
Accept a system of gasoline rationing so that we could cut our consumption of gasoline and therefore reduce the amount of money we as a nation spend abroad on oil	59	28	13	66	23	11
Pay 10¢ a gallon more for gasoline, with a gas tax refund on your income tax, if it would cut back our consumption of gasoline and therefore reduce the amount of money we as a nation spend abroad on oil	50	41	9	56	34	10
Pay 25¢ a gallon more for gasoline, with a gas tax refund on your income tax, if it would cut back our consumption of gasoline and therefore reduce the amount of money we as a nation spend abroad on oil	30	61	9	36	52	12
Support the use of military force by the oil consuming countries, such as the U.S., Western Europe and Japan, and take oil out of the hands of the Arabs	25	59	16	32	52	16

There were some indications that willingness to sacrifice could be increased by political leaders, but only to a modest degree. When those who had declared themselves "not willing" to make a particular sacrifice, or "not sure," were asked whether they would be willing if the President and the Secretary of State were to ask the people in this country to do it, a few more persons said that they would. In most cases, however, these people would add only between 5% and 7% to the total expressing willingness to make a given sacrifice, and would not change the direction of public reaction.

We cannot be sure, of course, whether people are able accurately to forecast their response to appeals by the nation's political leaders. If they are, the influence of leadership appears to be rather slight. The general willingness to go without meat one day a week, or to cut gasoline consumption, or to spend tax dollars on developing energy resources, could be increased a little further by urging from the President and the Secretary of State. But even such urgings, according to those surveyed, could not convince them to accept such unpopular measures as paying 10% more for food, or paying a 25¢ per gallon gasoline tax. And the strong rejection of using military force against oil producing countries would remain almost unaffected.

ECONOMIC AID FOR DEVELOPMENT AND EMERGENCY RELIEF

The same concern with the U.S. economy that leads to support for cooperative efforts and sacrifices to meet economic problems leads also to a great reluctance to invest heavily in support of economic development abroad. A majority of Americans (56%), favored cutting back on economic aid, compared with only 10% favoring expansion and 28% wanting to keep it at the same level. Twenty-four percent named it as one of the first one or two federal programs (out of 13) that should be cut back. And when people were asked to name two or three of the biggest foreign policy problems facing the U.S., the most common responses were a need to cut foreign aid and to help the U.S. first. The sentiment to cut economic aid, while not so strong as that to cut military aid, was substantial.

Only emergency relief received overwhelming support: 93% of the public favored giving emergency food and medical supplies in cases of natural disasters, such as floods or earthquakes. And, as we have noted, Americans were willing to reduce consumption of meat and of fertilizers in order to help provide food for hungry nations. Yet even this willingness was limited: the public (by 70% to 22%) resisted the idea of paying higher food prices to send food abroad.

One concern underlying opposition to economic aid was the state of the U.S. economy. Few respondents (only 25%) believed that economic aid to other countries helps our economy at home; 63% thought that it hurts our economy. While most people felt that economic aid helps the economy of other countries (77%), helps the people in other countries live better (70%), and helps the national security of other countries (64%), these aims apparently did not have high priority. Less than a plurality of the public accepted the original arguments for economic aid—that it helps our own national security (44%) or that it helps prevent the spread of communism (36%). Large majorities feared that it makes other countries too dependent on the U.S. (74%), gets us too involved in other countries' affairs (73%), and makes the rulers of foreign countries rich (66%). A narrow majority felt that economic aid aggravates relations with other countries (52%).

The most important reasons for opposition to economic aid, as revealed in the strength of their relationships with the aid question, were doubts that aid helps our own national security, and doubts that aid helps our economy at home. More altruistic considerations, such as whether it helps people in other countries live better or helps the economy of other countries—or whether, on the other hand, it merely makes the rulers of foreign countries rich—played a much less significant part in affecting public attitudes.

Moreover, judgments about whether or not economic aid helps prevent the spread of communism played next to the smallest role in decisions whether to favor or oppose economic aid; and concern with whether or not aid aggravates relations with other countries played the smallest part of all. The traditional justification for foreign aid, invoked strongly during the 1950's, has

TABLE V-4. Willingness to accept measures dealing with the food shortage—The Public

Measures to deal with food shortages abroad	Personal Willingness			Willingness If Asked By The President And Secretary Of State		
	Would Be Willing %	Not Willing %	Not Sure %	Would Be Willing %	Not Willing %	Not Sure %
Go without meat one day each week, in order to send more food abroad to help nations with food shortages	74	23	3	79	19	2
Cut out all unessential uses of fertilizer at home, including uses to beautify our lawns, so that more fertilizer would be available to other countries to help improve their agricultural crops and avoid starvation in these countries	68	23	9	74	18	8
Pay 10% more for food at home, in order to cut food consumption at home and send more food abroad to help nations with food shortages	22	70	8	30	59	11

lost much of its hold on the American people.

Further, most Americans rated our relations with developing nations as being less important, on the whole, than relations with industrialized nations, both Western and communist. Whereas 75% called relations with Western Europe "very important," 56% made the same judgment about Africa.

Finally, there was some evidence that average Americans were skeptical about how much benefit economic aid actually brings to the intended recipients. Only 9% thought that most of the economic aid we send abroad ends up helping the people of the countries; 52% thought that "only some" of the aid does so, and 34% thought "hardly any" helps the people of those countries.

American leaders were considerably more willing to give economic aid than was the general public. Forty-two percent (as contrasted with only 10% of the public) wanted to expand such aid. Practically all of the leaders (93%) favored economic aid in general, and a large majority (72%) favored easy-term loans to developing countries with large deficits ~~due~~ to oil costs. Among the general public, those with a college education (perhaps because they, like the national leaders, were less affected than average Americans by the recession) expressed more favorable attitudes toward economic aid.

TABLE V-5. Foreign economic aid—The Public

	Favor %	Oppose %	Not Sure %
Economic aid for purposes of economic development and technical assistance	52	38	10
Giving economic aid if sure that it ended up helping the people of those countries	79	13	8

The leaders held dramatically different beliefs from those of the public concerning the effects of economic aid. On the question of helping our own national security, 78% (34% more than the general public) thought that economic aid does so. And 69% (a full 44% more than among the general public) felt that economic aid helps our economy at home. Far fewer feared that aid makes other countries too dependent on the U.S., or that it gets us too involved in other countries' affairs.

Despite these findings, it would be an error to conclude that most Americans were strongly and unalterably opposed to economic assistance. The goals of raising the world standard of living, and of combatting world hunger, were generally subscribed to. The Marshall Plan of aid to Europe and the founding of the Peace Corps as well as the sending of emergency food to Bangladesh were widely cited as "proud moments," in contrast to the many "dark moments" associated with American involvement in wars and covert operations abroad.

Indeed most of the American public (52%, with 38% opposing) generally favored giving economic aid to other nations for purposes of economic development and technical assistance. The improvement of the American economy might well lead to considerably greater support for backing that commitment with substantial funds. And a strong majority, 79% of the public, declared that it would favor the giving of economic aid if they could be sure that it ended up helping the people of those countries.

If the American people could be given convincing evidence that their aid ended up in the right hands; or if new means could be devised to ensure that aid helped the people of recipient countries, Americans might be willing to support the giving of substantial amounts of such aid even in a time of economic hardship.

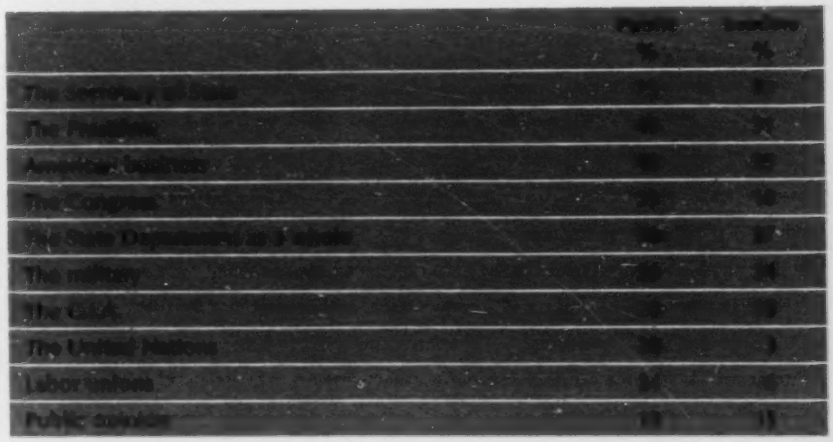
VI. Who Makes Foreign Policy?

In the era following Watergate and Vietnam, there is heightened sensitivity in the United States to how public decisions are made and by whom. The excesses of the Watergate period focused public attention on the role of the White House and the President. Two decades of U.S. military intervention, culminating in U.S. military involvement in Vietnam, had previously focused attention on the role of Congress, the State Department, the CIA, and the Defense Department as well as the President and the White House.

This survey, conducted four months after Gerald Ford succeeded Richard Nixon as President, confirmed the preeminence of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger as the most important actor in determining U.S. foreign policy. An overwhelming 97% of U.S. leaders view Dr. Kissinger as playing a "very important" role, and 73% of the public support this view.

In contrast, the President is viewed by only 51% of the leaders as being "very important" and by 49% of the public as "very important" in the conduct of foreign policy. The comparable figures for the role of the military are 34% and 36%; for the State Department 27% and 38%; for American business 25% and 42%, Congress 18% and 39%, the CIA 18% and 28% and public opinion 15% and 19%. These figures about popular attitudes make it clear that there is a discrepancy between leadership and public estimation of the role of American business and of the United States Congress in making U.S. foreign policy, with the public seeing each as more important than the leaders do.

TABLE VI-1. Very important role currently played by various parties in determining U.S. foreign policy



But who should be more important —who less important—in making American foreign policy? Fifty-eight percent of leaders polled felt Congress should be more important and 55% also agree with regard to the State Department as a whole. Only 7% felt the Secretary of State should be more important. By contrast, fifty-eight percent of the public believes that public opinion should play a more important role; and 49% feel the Congress' role should be more important; 44% for the President; and 30% for the Secretary of State.

Both samples support the view that Congress plays too weak a role in determining foreign policy in comparison with the role of the President—only 10% of both public and leaders believe that Congress plays too strong a role; while 51% of leaders and 38% of the public believe Congress is playing too weak a role. But at the same time, both samples rate the job that the Secretary of State is doing very high—85% positive rating (combined "excellent" and "pretty good" performance) among leaders, and 75% among the total public. The rating of Mr. Kissinger as Secretary of State is highest among business, educational and political leaders (96%/90%/87%) and lowest among labor leaders and leaders of minority groups (50% and 58%).

Leaders and public are also inclined to grant the Secretary of State considerable latitude in his diplomatic style. Fifty-three percent of leaders and 58% of the public believe that Kissinger's kind of diplomacy is "necessary and in the best interests of the United States," and only 38% and 26%, respectively, believe he has been "too secretive and has not consulted our allies enough."

On working for peace, the Secretary of State continues to receive higher marks than the President. Among leaders and public, Mr. Ford rates "excellent" with only 9% and 10%, respectively, and "pretty good" with 43% and 40%, respectively. However, these ratings compare favorably with those for Congress—with 2% of the leaders and

5% of the public rating Congress' performance as "excellent" while 30% and 37% rate Congress' job as "pretty good." Again, leaders proved to be more critical of Congress than the public at large.

In this survey—conducted before the recent disclosures about the alleged domestic role of the CIA—the agency received a 44% positive job performance rating by leaders and 38% negative; (public ratings 31% positive, 39% negative). The public is more supportive of CIA activities inside other countries to "strengthen those elements that serve weaken those forces that work against the United States." 35% of leaders support such work, and 59% oppose it. Of the public, 43% support such activities and only 26% oppose it.

Overall, the American public continues to want strong initiatives by the Secretary of State while increasing the influence of Congress and public opinion. But to what extent is the public prepared to support the curtailing of freedom and flexibility for the Secretary of State, in order to give Congress a larger role? The views expressed in this survey do not provide a clear answer. It is also not clear how far the public will go in supporting a larger role for Congress, if this in fact means cutting back on the power of the Secretary of State.